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40 Illinois Attorneys Under Forty to Watch

Supplement to Chicago Daily Law Bulletin and Chicago Lawyer

Yao O. Dinizulu

Age: 34

Specialty: Personal Injury, Medical Malpractice, Nursing Home Negligence & Commercial Litigation.

Law School: University of Illinois College of Law

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Yao Dinizulu has accomplished much in his short legal career. Three years after earning his law degree, Mr. Dinizulu helped to found the Chicago law firm of Harris, Mitchell & Dinizulu, LLC. He quickly established himself as an aggressive and effective litigator able to secure favorable verdicts for his clients and handsome rewards. In the first six months of 2007, Mr. Dinizulu obtained two settlements in excess of \$1 million.

These outcomes are all the more impressive because of Mr. Dinizulu's diverse skill sets and expertise. Mr. Dinizulu has litigated cases involving employment issues, including wrongful termination cases; nursing home negligence; medical malpractice; and premises liability.

"Mr. Dinizulu is very bright and energetic, and represents his clients with great zeal without losing sight of reasonableness," said retired Judge Donald Devlin who presided over a medical malpractice suicide trial litigated by Mr. Dinizulu. "He is also a very aggressive litigator, but one who does not stray from the bounds of civility and decency."

Mr. Dinizulu has taken on cases that other attorneys might have viewed as impossible to win. In one lawsuit filed in the Circuit Court of Cook County, Mr. Dinizulu represented a woman who claimed she had been fired from her job after being forced to return to work too soon after suffering a serious physical injury while operating a drill press. The defense attempted to bar the testimony of four experts and sought to substantially curtail the plaintiff's ability to put on any evidence regarding the circumstances leading up to her dismissal. Even though the presiding judge's rulings made Mr. Dinizulu's case more difficult, he argued so persuasively for his client that the jury awarded her a verdict of nearly \$1.8 million. The portion of the award dealing with pain and suffering was nearly 10 times greater than any previously

reported jury award or settlement in Cook County for a wrongful termination case.

Mr. Dinizulu's persistence and stellar courtroom performances have earned him praise and adoration from his fellow attorneys.

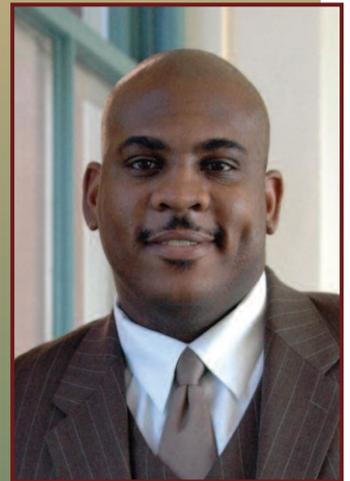
"I was impressed with his sheer doggedness in pursuing a case that I think many lawyers would have passed on," said Chicago attorney Michael Rathsack. "There was no smoking gun such as a comment by a supervisor or a memo in a file to prove her firing was retaliatory."

"Mr. Dinizulu is well spoken and concise in his arguments," said Judge Sharon Coleman. "He is a ferocious yet professional advocate."

In his spare time, Mr. Dinizulu mentors other young attorneys and advocates for increased diversity in the field of law, introducing lucrative careers to young people of color. In addition, at a young age, Mr. Dinizulu has taken up the cause of elder abuse, and has exposed the neglect that some senior citizens suffer in institutionalized care.

Mr. Dinizulu also takes time to perform "give-backs" to his profession. He is an active member of the Cook County Bar Association, the Chicago Bar Association and the Illinois Trial Lawyers Association. He also serves as a member of his alma maters' alumni associations at Florida A&M University and the University of Illinois' College of Law. Mr. Dinizulu also has demonstrated a commitment to his community while serving on the board of directors for several community development organizations, including Bethel New Life and Centers for a New Horizon.

Through his trial advocacy, poise and drive, Mr. Dinizulu is destined to become one of Chicago's top litigators.



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